



NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.

1879.

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ADDRESSES.

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DR. SAMUEL S. PURPLE'S VALEDICTORY.

DR. FORDYCE BARKER'S INAUGURAL.



# NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE,

INSTITUTED, 1847. INCORPORATED, 1851.

12 West Thirty-first Street.

Regular Meetings, First and Third Thursday Evenings in the Month.

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
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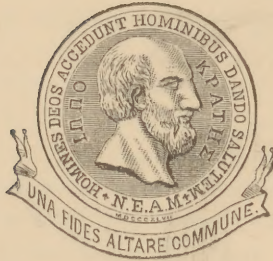
# VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

*DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF  
MEDICINE, JANUARY 16, 1879.*

BY

SAMUEL S. PURPLE, M.D.,

RETIRING PRESIDENT OF THE ACADEMY.



NEW YORK:  
PRINTED FOR THE ACADEMY,  
12 WEST THIRTY-FIRST STREET.  
1879.



## VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

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### FELLOWS OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE:

FOUR years ago, by your kind partiality, for which I feel deeply grateful, I was called to discharge the duties of President of this Academy. To-night I come here to surrender my stewardship into your hands. During my official service experience has prompted thoughts, and convictions have been formed, which if rightly understood, may promote the welfare of this institution. Before giving place to him whom you have with so much unanimity chosen to succeed me, permit me to ask your indulgence for a few minutes to give utterance to some of those thoughts which my experience as your chief executive officer for so long a time has suggested. In doing this I will endeavor to avoid encroachment upon the legitimate aspirations of my most worthy successor.

1st. *As regards the meetings of the Academy.*—My immediate predecessor in office called your attention to the desirability of a meeting of the Academy on an evening of every week, with a view to provide for a fuller discussion of the topics presented in the papers read at the Stated Meetings. Experience has continued to demonstrate that the immediate discussion of papers read at the Stated Meetings have proved unsatisfactory. The plan which Dr. Flint proposed, and which I most heartily endorse, was to have discussion follow one week after the reading of the papers, thus affording the needed time for members who have listened to their reading to mature, by study and reflection, the thoughts which they might desire to offer on the subject; and also for your presiding officer to detail one or more Fellows, familiar with the subject and the author's views,



to lead the discussion. This would, there is no doubt, be an advance in the right direction. Besides, there would ultimately grow out of such a measure a collateral advantage: it would tend to draw to the Academy, from such Fellows as may be engaged in special investigations and practice, a class of papers of great interest—papers the reading of which are now in a measure confined to the several small societies which have a limited membership and a feeble vitality. By such a plan inducements would be held out that will make it for the interest, as we doubt not it is the desire of our intelligent friends of the different specialties, to lay before the greatest numbers of the profession the results of their mature investigations and practice. Where then, let me ask, could they reap a greater harvest of renown than would certainly follow the reading of their papers before this Academy?

2d. *Of the fellowship, initiation fee, and annual dues.*—The conviction has been reluctantly forced upon my mind that the initiation fee, which at present is five dollars, is far too small an amount, considering position and privileges conferred upon the recipient by the Academy's Fellowship. I recommend that it be placed at twenty dollars at least, and that it be used, as now, for the current expenses of the Academy. As regards the annual dues, our present By-Laws make no provision for compounding this tax. I believe this should be permitted; and provision ought to be made which would allow any resident Fellow, who has been a member for five years, and who is qualified to vote at the annual election, to compound his annual dues by the payment of a sum of money, to be determined on the principles guiding correct life insurance. The plan could be easily prepared by a committee of your Council, and when agreed to by the latter, should be recommended to the Academy in the form of a By-Law;—the full amount of money paid to the Academy for composition fees, in lieu of annual dues, to be added to the general permanent fund; but the interest may be used for the current expenses of the Academy. The adoption of such a plan would most certainly strengthen the permanent bonds of this institution, and also cement more



firmly its Fellowship. In support of the feasibility and utility of this proposed measure, I will state that the principle has been in part adopted by one of the most prosperous medical societies of London, and been found to work well, and has proved advantageous to both the Society and its Fellowship.

The proposed institution of a scheme to provide, in the Constitution and By-Laws of this Academy, for the establishment of a class to be denominated Benefactors, is a measure worthy of the careful attention of every Fellow. After giving the subject my serious attention, I most heartily commend the project to you for adoption. This I am the more inclined to do for the reason that this Academy has already received tangible evidence of the inherent interest felt by the profession and the public in its efforts to advance the best interests of medical science.

The changes made by death in our Fellowship during the past two years have been unusually great: Andrews, Beales, Bogert, Buck, Budd, Clarkson, Hirsch, Kilbourne, Paine, Parigot, Peaslee, Randolph, Schirmer, Stanley, Stirling, Snelling, Wilkes, and Wooster, have been stricken down in our midst. Each appreciated and honorably discharged the obligations of their membership; none more so than Peaslee, who, though being dead, yet speaketh to us in his noble deeds and in yonder striking likeness: for who is there that will doubt that his example, as well as his great literary labors, shall live in all future time, or that his disinterested acts of benevolence—his thoughtful interest in this institution—will be remembered as long as medical men shall here congregate and labor for the good of their time-honored profession?

3d. *Of the Library: its growth and usefulness.*—Within the past two years the Library has been thrown open to the *free* use of the profession and the *public*. The wisdom of this measure has been clearly demonstrated by the fact that a large and constantly increasing number of readers, both of the profession and the public, have availed themselves of the privileges thus offered. The increase in donations also, as in numbers of consultations, has been notably great during the past months,

as shown by the registers—the full details of which have been presented to you in the semi-monthly reports of your Library Committee. This Library has developed in such degree, that to simply say it is remarkable, falls far short of the fact. No public library in this country, with as limited moneyed resources, has ever grown like this; and, under the auspices and care of this Academy, I believe no other will keep pace with it (except that having the patronage of the General Government at Washington). From its inception I recognize the inherent love for this institution that predominates in the medical profession of this city. Permit me to summarize the results which have come from the adoption of the measures recommended to you:

1. It has caused liberal and valuable donations to the Library.
2. It has rendered accessible information to all, and in particular to a deserving class of the younger members of the profession, who, from lack of income, are unable to secure such privileges by purchase.
3. It has placed this institution with that class which under the law is exempt from city and State taxation.

But, Fellows of the Academy, we must not rest here in our labors to promote the interests of the medical profession in this great city. The time has arrived when this institution can still more fully establish definite claims to usefulness, by instituting a circulating department in its Library—utilizing its present resources by allowing the duplicates, which already number more than two thousand five hundred titles of books, pamphlets, and volumes of medical journals, to be used for circulation. I would therefore recommend you to establish a circulating department of the Library, and invite donations for the more complete perfection of this object. The expense of such a measure need not be great, and there are good reasons to believe that the cost would be readily provided. Such, at least, is the opinion of those who have carefully considered the subject and have measured the difficulties which appear to lie in the way of its accomplishment. The common assumption, that the number of books which a Library circulates in our profession measures its usefulness, is without

doubt a mistake. He who seeks the privileges of such a Library is generally in need of a monograph, pamphlet, or a medical journal which contains an important fact, or article on a particular subject; and these constitute the class of duplicates which most abound in our Library, and which in future are certain to increase. Then, again, by the establishment of such a measure you would extend to the younger and deserving members of the profession additional aid and sympathy in their labors—privileges which to the recipient are so grateful, and to the giver would certainly, in this instance, prove a powerful element in advancing the best interests of the profession.

4th. *Of the necessity of a closer union of the community of our Fellowship, and of the resources of the medical profession in this city.*—To most effectually accomplish these results, there are measures which ere long will of necessity come before you, and that ought to be carried into effect without causing division of feeling or interest—measures which would greatly redound to the good of the whole profession; and I feel quite confident that the good sense and calm judgment of my successor, aided by the resolute support of the active and working portion of the Fellows of this Academy, will be competent to devise and execute plans which will concentrate the literary resources, arouse the dormant zeal of lukewarm members, and enlarge the social bonds of the profession in this city—results greatly to be desired.

As bearing upon this matter, how praiseworthy the actions, and how cheering are the results which have followed the united efforts of our *confrères* of a sister city, in centralizing the literary resources of the profession, and in offering increased facilities for social intercourse. And here let me ask you all these questions: Is it possible that a more damaging censure to the profession in this city can exist than is now heaped upon it by those who, wrapped in their selfishness, limit the resources and thereby impede the progress of literary and social improvement in our midst? Has it not been demonstrated, over and over again, that, in all large communities or cities, the good order, the effective power, and the beneficent influence



of the medical profession, greatly depend upon the harmonious movements of individual members, as well as of its various societies ; and that in all efforts which are put forth, and which have for their aim the correction of existing evils—the honor and good of society—it becomes the sacred duty of individuals, and still more so that of societies, to subordinate personal interests, if not opinions, to the advancement of professional and public good ? And that party who fails to recognize early these facts will, ere long, be left to the gallings of a chiding conscience and the scathing condemnation of their medical brethren.

It must be obvious to any discerning observer that the unity of our profession, as well as that of all others, is greatly promoted by the cheerful reciprocity of the usual forms of social intercourse, and that it is the bounden duty of all of its members to exhibit to the community the oneness of the regular profession—its separateness from all that savors of irregularity or empiricism—and to promote, even at the sacrifice of personal opinions, a closer interchange of views and a higher regard for all efforts which are put forth to elevate the standard of professional excellence and sustain the honor and dignity of the medical profession.

And now, Fellows of the Academy, before I pass to the close of these desultory remarks, it becomes my duty to remind you :

1st. Of the necessity of active measures in the matter of the early liquidation of the mortgage on this property.

2d. Of the great need of more enlarged accommodations for the Library, and also for the general meetings of the profession.

Of the first measure I feel confident that the energy and zeal of my successor in office will certainly be equal to the emergency ; while of the second measure it affords me the greatest pleasure to now state to you, that I am authorized, by a very worthy and distinguished member of the profession, who has called upon me and has manifested his appreciation of your liberal efforts to advance the social interests of the



profession, by a pledge of FIVE thousand dollars of the amount (seven thousand dollars) required to build the extension and make the necessary alterations of this building according to the plans which were submitted to you by your Committee on Ways and Means in 1875. The only condition of this noble benefaction is, that this Academy shall raise the remaining *two* thousand dollars. In view of this generous offer, can we not raise, before the close of this evening's exercises, this amount? If so, the desired improvement will be made, and our accommodations will be ample for the whole profession.

But, fellow members, I will detain you no longer. The time has arrived when it remains only for me to thank you, one and all, for the uniform courtesy which you have shown me on all occasions and in all my shortcomings, and to express my most ardent wish for the future success of this institution.

And to you, Mr. President-elect, it becomes my duty now to place in your hands the Constitution and By-Laws of this Academy, and charge you to see well to it that all its obligations and requirements are fully carried out to the better maintenance of the organization. I have no fear, sir, that the elevating and onward progress of this institution will falter under your leadership. You bring to the discharge of the duties invested in the office a large experience and a brilliant reputation; and these, sir, will tend greatly to promote the success of your administration. I wish you a greater success than that which has followed any of your predecessors; and I am sure you will receive, in the faithful discharge of the duties of the office, the hearty and warm support of every Fellow of this Academy.



AN  
INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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BY  
FORDYCE BARKER, M.D., LL.D.,  
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## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

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### *FELLOWS OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF MEDICINE:*

WHILE deeply appreciating the honor which you have conferred upon me, I must acknowledge that I received the intelligence of my election with no feeling of exultation, but rather with a sense of anxiety and apprehension. Remembering the object and purposes of the founders of the New York Academy of Medicine, what it has already done, and what its future must be, if it adequately accomplish its mission, reflecting how much depends upon the zeal, energy, tact, and sound judgment of the one selected to act both as its executive chief and its most laborious servant, and recalling the names of my distinguished predecessors in this chair, the dead and the living, I can but feel painfully conscious of the difficulty of filling the ideal which the position demands.

It is now thirty-two years since all the best men of our profession in this city, as I have been informed, united in organizing this Academy. The necessity for such an organization was apparent, and good men and true co-operated to accomplish the result. They fully appreciated the great good which such an organization might effect, in stimulating its members to greater mental activity, to higher culture, to contributions to the literature of the profession, to the cultivation of social intercourse and the intimacy of personal relations which break down prejudice, prevent depreciation, and develop the feeling of common brotherhood, thus most effectually conducing to place the profession in such public estimation as is its due from its high aims, its importance to the community, and to the well-being of society. Its objects, as formally defined in the

Constitution, are such as must be heartily approved and zealously sustained by every honorable and high-toned member of the profession. Its aim was not the mere culture of a special department, but was broad in its scope, taking in the whole domain of our professional work.

It may now be pertinent to inquire how far it has been successful in accomplishing its mission, what it has done for its members, what it has added to literature and science, and what influence it has had on the profession and the public.

I shall not attempt to picture the state of the profession as regards its ethical relations to its own members and to society, its standing in public estimation, its work, either in the direction of medical societies or in the way of contributions to literature and science, previous to the organization of the Academy of Medicine, for of this I am not competent to speak from personal knowledge. But I may refer to the progress which has been made in all of these directions since that time, and which I think is due in a great measure to the influence of the Academy.

Thirty-two years ago there was no public medical society in this city the proceedings of which were reported, or which added to the common stock of the scientific literature of the profession.

The New York County Medical Society was dragging on a mere organic existence by keeping its offices filled, but was doing no scientific work and had little influence on the ethical condition of the profession. The Pathological Society was just commencing its useful career; and long may it continue its noble work as an efficient contributor of positive knowledge and a teacher of young and old in a most important branch of our science. There were doubtless many societies, semi-scientific, semi-social, doing much good in this way; but their usefulness was chiefly limited to their own circles.

Since the early period of its history, New York has always had some bright and shining lights, who, by their abilities and acquirements, their able medical writings and their brilliant achievements in surgery, have secured an honorable record in the annals of our profession. But I think my seniors now

present will confirm my assertion, that the general reputation of the medical profession of New York, outside of this city, before the organization of the Academy of Medicine was, that it did less for literature and science than it should, and that it was chiefly devoted to its pecuniary rewards. While, from a careful examination of the medical periodical literature previous to this time, I have become convinced that this reproach was in a great measure without just foundation, yet it must be confessed that the number of works by New York medical authors could almost be counted on the fingers.

I cannot speak of the standing and influence of the profession in the community, or of the social relations of its members with each other. I have heard many stories of the rivalry and hostility of its most eminent men; how they denounced each other as knaves or fools; how they criticised the practice or the operations of those who were not of their special cliques; how pleasantly they repeated the slanderous gossip or the truthful anecdote which injuriously affected the personal or professional reputation of those who were deemed rivals; and how all this destroyed the reliance of the public in the profession as a body, leaving only such personal confidence as individuals might secure; and how all this contributed to prepare the public to accept readily the pretensions of quackery and to receive with open arms new systems and new schools, however absurd, transcendental, and opposed to common sense might be the theories on which such systems and such schools were based. But all this was so long ago, let us hope that none of these traditions were true, for in the present rapid advance of professional progress, thirty-two years constitute a long era.

Within this period, the New York County Medical Society has become a most useful and active working body, and has brought out many valuable and scientific papers, which have been well and ably discussed before large professional audiences. In addition to its scientific work, it has, by the laws of the State, important ethical duties in protecting the community from dangerous and irresponsible pretenders as medical practitioners, and also in preserving the professional morals of all

regular and authorized physicians. Some of us have had the opportunity of learning, during the past year, how faithful it is to these duties, and how sharply it looks after any errors in conduct, whether committed wilfully or through thoughtless inadvertence. As most, if not all, the Fellows of the Academy are members of this Society, we as a body can but feel the greatest interest in its work, and regard it as well worthy of our confidence and support, and we must deem it a misfortune to the profession and to science if it be not kept up to its present high standard of excellence. He who would attempt to elevate the one by depreciating the other is a common enemy, alike to the Academy of Medicine, the New York County Medical Society, and the profession of this city.

We have also many other societies which are devoted to the cultivation of special departments of medicine, and are accomplishing much in their spheres by inciting men to work. I venture to suggest to the candid consideration of all honest and disinterested minds whether much of this work might not be done more effectively and more profitably in the appropriate sections of the Academy, as in this way the aggregate results would be brought out more prominently for the benefit of the whole profession.

The scientific work which the Academy has done is very much more than is generally supposed. It has published five volumes of Transactions, and four volumes of the Bulletin, in all more than four thousand and two hundred pages. If to this be added the papers which have not appeared in either of these volumes but have been published elsewhere, being chiefly the papers and the discussions of the past two years, the aggregate of the printed work of the Academy is more than five thousand octavo pages. I have recently looked over our published volumes with special reference to the quality and value of the work which has been done, and I am confident that the verdict of every one competent to express an opinion must be that it has been worthy of the Academy. Some of the papers which have been read before the Academy must still rank as the best that have been written on the subjects considered.



The discussions of many topics which have been brought before us have been able and thorough. Many such might be referred to as of remarkable merit. Our discussion on puerperal fever was the inciting cause of one on the same topic by the Academy of Medicine of Paris, which was continued more than a year. Where is there to be found, in medical literature, in any language, a more thorough, able, and exhaustive discussion of albuminuria, in all its bearings and relations, than appears in the publications of the New York Academy of Medicine? I might refer to many other papers and discussions. It is really surprising to note how many of the profession of this city are ignorant of, or regard with indifference, the scientific work which has been done here; but it illustrates the tendency to overlook and ignore what is directly under our eyes.

The powerful influence which this Academy has exerted on the profession is by no means fully represented by the work which it has done as a body. No one has so clearly and so eloquently pointed out the great good which such organizations accomplish in making additions to professional knowledge, and giving an impetus of the most forcible and purest kind to the advance of knowledge in the future, as Sir William Jenner, in the opening address before the Section of Medicine of the British Medical Association. We shall all agree with him in the statement, that they enable men to bring before an audience, capable of appreciating their worth, observations and conclusions founded on those observations. The consciousness that their labors will certainly be laid before an appreciating audience, and be by them at once submitted to oral criticism, stimulates men to labor with greater zeal, to test again and again the accuracy of their observations, in order themselves to detect their flaws; to think out for themselves the objections that may be taken to their methods of observation, and the arguments that may be adduced against the accuracy of their conclusions. Thus the zealous worker is stimulated in his zeal, the accurate observer is encouraged to yet greater accuracy, and the logical reasoner more closely trained to

admit even to himself only the most strictly deducible conclusions.

The discussions which follow awake in those who take part in them, and in those who are listeners only, new ideas, and give form to ideas before imperfectly formed in their minds, and do that which is for all men so essential, force them to think. For intellectual and scientific progress, the giving to others, and the receiving from others, ideas is essential; for the circulation of ideas is as necessary for scientific and intellectual life and growth as is the circulation of blood for physical life and growth. The ideas of others are the seed of new ideas in ourselves. We give—we receive; and new ideas are begotten; a third, differing from its parents, is the outcome of the two. The new ideas thus created, open out wider fields for research and fresh methods of testing the value of the results of research. Again, as men talk one with another, new modes are discovered of looking at old things; prejudices fade away, identity of fact and meaning are found to underlie differences in words; and by comparing their own observations and their own conclusions with those of others, they correct the former and rectify the latter. Men's minds are excited to think in new directions, and to carry their thoughts into action, and prejudices, those drags on the acquisition of knowledge, are lightened! How true it is that such organizations not only give the profession the intellectual advantage flowing from intellectual and scientific communion, but also social and moral advantages! Our hearts are opened to feel more kindly to all of our professional brethren. We become conscious of a real common brotherhood. We find ourselves, we know not how, regarding facts morally, as well as scientifically professional from others' points of view; appreciating more highly the merits of others, and looking less hardly at their faults; feeling less confident that we are right and others wrong; estimating our own merits somewhat less highly, and our professional brothers somewhat more highly; rejoicing that a new fact has been discovered, or a new and more correct conclusion drawn from old facts, rather than glorying in the part we have played

in the discovery ; rejoicing in the fact that a discovery of service to the race has been made, and not in the accident that we have made it.

There can, therefore, be no doubt in the minds of those who, without prejudice, search for causes, that to the Academy is largely due the mental activity which has been developed in later years, by the profession in this city, and which has brought forth abundant fruit in the form of literary and scientific works. Few, perhaps, have noted how many works have been written by the Fellows of the Academy. I cannot give a complete list of these works, but I may mention those which now occur to me, as the following : Treatises, by two of our members, on Physiology, the most advanced, original, and complete which have yet appeared in the English language ; a large work on the Practice of Medicine. Numerous special works, as on Fevers ; on Diseases of the Heart and Lungs ; on Physical Diagnosis ; on Diseases of the Nervous System ; on Diseases of Women ; on Diseases of Children ; on Materia Medica and Therapeutics ; on Ovarian Tumors ; on Midwifery ; on the Puerperal Diseases. Works on General Surgery, by two of our number, on Military Surgery ; on Uterine Surgery ; on Vesico-vaginal Fistula ; a Treatise on Fractures and Dislocations ; on the Diseases of the Genito-Urinary Organs ; on Stricture ; on the Venereal Diseases ; on the Diseases of the Bones ; on Diseases of the Ear ; on Orthopædy ; on Pott's Disease ; on Dermatology ; on the Medical and Surgical Uses of Electricity ; and several others, which I do not at this moment recall. Many of these have passed through several editions, have been republished in England, and have been translated into several foreign languages. I think the assertion may be demonstrated to be true, that a physician, whose library consists exclusively of all the works by the Fellows of this Academy, has a better and more useful working library than belonged to a large majority of the profession in this country thirty-two years ago.

It should be the aim of the Academy to aid the profession in acquiring the highest culture and such superior erudition as

can only be attained by access to the literature of the past. For that purpose it has, mainly within the past four years, made earnest efforts to gather a Library which shall be free to all the profession, and which shall contain everything of value in medical literature. How successful it has been is shown by the fact that, four years ago, our Library contained only about four hundred volumes, while now it has more than nine thousand. In one respect this Library surpasses all others, in that it has the most complete set of all the medical journals which have been published in this country. It has also now more than sixty current American, English, French, German and other foreign medical periodicals and transactions of learned societies, regularly received and on the tables; and this number will be largely increased during the coming year. It is no less a pleasure than a duty to express, in behalf of the Academy, its great indebtedness to our retiring President, Dr. Samuel S. Purple, through whose fervent zeal, persistent energy, and unparalleled liberality, this remarkable success has been attained. At the lowest estimate, ten thousand dollars could not have bought for us the precious volumes which he has given to our Library. He will be gratefully remembered by the New York physicians of the future, as well as by those of the present day; and it is to be hoped that such a noble example will have many followers, even though it may be at a humble distance and in a minor degree.

It is a matter for congratulation that the financial condition of the Academy is so excellent, in that its receipts are considerably in excess of its expenses and the interest on its indebtedness of \$10,000, covered by a mortgage on our building; we have also in the General Permanent Fund, in the Library Fund, and in the treasury of the Committee on Ways and Means, the sum of \$1,326. If I were now to put the question, whether, in consideration of the character, standing, and influence of the Academy of Medicine, it be not its duty to set a good example to the churches by forthwith paying off its debt of \$10,000 and removing the mortgage, I doubt not that I should hear a rousing, unanimous aye. It can be done easily, and I am strong in the faith that it will be done speedily.



When this result is accomplished, how rapidly will the time come when our Library will be filled to overflowing, and we shall require more room for our books. How long shall it be before we will cover our vacant lot and hold our meetings in a hall specially adapted for the purpose, elegant, convenient, well-lighted, and perfectly ventilated ; for in this particular also it is our special duty to set a good example.

During the past summer I read a communication in the *London Times*, dated June 27, and signed Rawdon Macnamara, ex-President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, in which it was stated "that this college was founded just over 100 years ago. It was originally started in a modest building, in one of the back streets of Dublin, but, gaining reputation by the high standard of its examinations, and funds by the prudent administration of its income, it eventually moved to its present site, where it built a college which is one of the handsomest buildings in Dublin, a city the public buildings of which are unusually admired. Within the past year the college has actually expended out of its reserve ten thousand pounds sterling in still further extending its library (now the largest medical library in the United Kingdom) and its museum." It has also the College of Physicians, with its fine hall and library.

Now, my only comment on this is, that Dublin has not one-third of the population of New York, nor does it possess one-twentieth part of the wealth of this city.

Permit me now to say a few words in regard to the work of our Stated Meetings. Within a few years past, changes have been made in our Constitution and By-laws which have greatly added to the interest and the usefulness of these meetings. Most of the organic work of the Academy is now done by committees and the Council, and hence no time is now frittered away in the discussion of parliamentary usage or motions and amendments. No cheap notoriety can now be gained by frivolous speeches on such matters, by those who, from incompetency or from a just self-appreciation, fortunately never take part in the scientific discussions. Those who now attend our meetings are sure to find that the time of the session will be

almost wholly devoted to the reading and discussion of the papers which are previously announced.

It is most pleasing to note how many of the older and more prominent members of the profession are habitually—indeed, I may say, conscientiously—present, while the zeal and interest of the younger members seem to be progressively increasing. Good papers and good discussions are sure to call out full meetings. Even special subjects, which, at first sight, would have apparently but little interest for the mass of the profession, may prove to be most valuable and instructive to all. If I may be allowed to indulge in a personal reminiscence, I will refer to the effect upon myself of one of our meetings a few weeks since. The evening was not one to tempt a wearied and neuralgic man to go out, and the subject of the paper to be read, Eczema, was one in which I did not feel the slightest interest, because I had always treated this affection most satisfactorily to my patients and myself. I suppose that it is my duty to say what my successful treatment has been, and I shall therefore avow that it was simply to send all patients, who consulted me for this affection, to some one of our excellent dermatologists. I attended the meeting solely from a sense of duty, which I think we all owe to those who devote the time and study necessary for the preparation of a paper for the Academy, provided that we have reason to anticipate that the paper will be a good one. To my great surprise I found myself intensely interested, because not only the author of the paper, but the speakers who discussed it, brought out many new facts in regard to the therapeutical effects of agents of which before I knew very little. I was incited, on my return home, to consult every book on therapeutics in my library; and in consequence of listening to this paper and the discussion on it, I am certain that I added more to my stock of knowledge of remedies in this one evening than I had acquired before in a whole year. It was thus made apparent to me how much may be learned from listening to papers and discussions, even of subjects which do not practically occupy me. Although I have nothing to do with surgery, except obstetric surgery, never even opening an abscess if I

can avoid it, yet I am sure that I would be interested and instructed by hearing a paper on the reproduction of bone, or the proper manipulations for the reduction of certain dislocations, or any other surgical paper written by one competent to do the work well. I may even go so far as to avow my belief in the possibility that a paper by one of our distinguished ophthalmologists might have the fascination of the drama and the utility of a sermon, if read at one of our meetings, even if it were filled with new learned words which we had never seen or heard of before, and we were compelled to look up in *Dunglison's Dictionary* the meaning of the title of the paper.

It is to be regretted that some of our prominent men in the profession, who formerly attended its meetings, read papers, and took part in the discussion, are now seldom seen with us. It may be that the flight of time has worn out the professional ardor of their youth, or blunted their sense of duty to the profession, and that they have arrived at that happy consummation when they have nothing more to learn, with no desire to add to the knowledge or correct the errors of others. They have probably settled down in placid contentment, with abundant means, a good practice, and a conceded position. But if the good hearts and sound principles of such could be roused to action, they would cheer and encourage us by their presence, and even if they took no part in our work, they would still be useful members of the Academy by being ornamental. It is to be feared, however, that some such are hopelessly impenitent, and that the final judgment of their contemporaries must be, that, while they were good husbands, fond fathers, excellent citizens, able physicians or skilful surgeons, they were defective in a proper appreciation of their duty to science and the profession.

It is strange that clever men, even looking at the matter from the low level of a selfish point of view, do not see how well good work done in the Academy pays. I know that many others, as well as myself, have been induced to send patients to, and thus put money into the pockets of, those who have read papers, or, in discussions, have brought out new ideas before the



Academy on such subjects as diseases of the rectum, the treatment of pneumonia, diseases of the ear, the relations of certain conditions of the eye to other affections, diseases of the skin, nervous diseases, and many others which I need not mention. Who that was present, a few weeks since, and listened to the remarkable paper "On Six Cases of Abdominal Pregnancy," would hesitate a moment in making a selection as to the proper person to call on for advice and aid, when meeting a case of this kind in his own practice? A sympathetic relation is established between the reader of a good paper and those who are listeners, which, explain it as you may, is not created by seeing the same paper in print.

I wish delicately to allude to another fact. A few—I am most happy to say a very few—of our conspicuous men have deserted our standard, and have resigned their Fellowship of the Academy. This action must have resulted either from misconception or misinformation, bad logic or bad judgment. I shall not say that the Academy can better afford to do without them than they can afford to keep aloof from the Academy, but I may say that it is to be hoped, for the mutual good of both, that some of them may in the future retrace their steps. I think I may venture to say to such, that

"Still the lamp holds out to burn"

(I will not complete the couplet), and that they will be warmly welcomed back, as they would doubtless "bring forth fruit meet for repentance," by good scientific work and by liberal contributions to our Library and our funds. It can hardly be expected of us that we should rejoice more over the sheep that was lost and is found than over the ninety-and-nine that went not astray. We welcome those who warmly sympathize with the aims of the Academy and who will zealously co-operate in its good work. From malcontents, croakers, and pessimists, "good Lord, deliver us"!

It is to be desired that, in the course of the year, we may have valuable and original papers pertaining to every department of medicine, so that the Academy may fairly represent

its progress, in physiology, pathology, the practice of medicine and surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, and each of the specialties. In therapeutics I think it may be claimed that the profession in this country are in advance of their brethren in Europe. This branch of study is peculiarly in harmony with the practical tendency of the American mind. Yet I have been struck by the fact that no paper on a therapeutical subject has ever been read before the Academy or has appeared in its Transactions; while before a county medical society, of Pennsylvania, a paper, entitled "Hints on Specific Medication," by Dr. Edward R. Mayer, of Wilkesbarre, was read and published by the society, so replete with original suggestion and observation that I hope some one of our number may be induced to work in the same direction and rival it in merit.

There can be no doubt that those who prepare papers to read before the Academy will do their best. It is to be hoped that those best qualified by special study and experience to discuss these papers, will make due preparation, in carefully maturing their ideas, and thus secure a facility in clear and lucid expression. We want no crude, ill-considered statement of fact, no frivolous effervescence of the moment. We would humanely spare all from making a pitiable, even though it be a ludicrous exhibition of folly and ignorance. The meetings of the Academy cannot become an arena for the display of garrulous imbecility, pretentious assumption, or, to borrow a phrase from Oliver Wendell Holmes, "the flippant loquacity of half knowledge."

The Academy ought, and the time is soon coming when it will, bring out and distribute annually among its members, to all the medical press, and to all other medical societies which publish transactions, a volume, the contents of which shall be worthy of the best paper, the finest typography, and the most handsome, appropriate binding. If such a volume should have such merits as the profession in this city ought to be able to give it, the demand for it by the profession throughout the country should secure for it, in a few years, a sale which would more than pay the expenses of publication.



Our zealous co-worker, "The Medical Journal Association of the City of New York," was some years in advance of the Academy in a successful effort to furnish for their members access to all current medical literature in the department of medical journals and monographs. It is still above us, at least one story. Its effort is one worthy of all commendation, and its usefulness to its members cannot be too highly estimated. I believe that I express the hope and the wish of the Academy that its walls may soon be extended, so that it may at no distant day give house room for all accumulations of this character, without money and without price; that the hall of the Academy shall always be open to the profession from all parts of the State and the country, in which they will be hospitably welcomed, and in which they will be sure to find every medical work, all medical journals in all languages, every essay and every paper known in medical literature.

May I not feel assured that every Fellow of the Academy will heartily co-operate with me in every effort to bring about this result as speedily as possible?